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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 29 March 2010 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

We write to express our strong condemnation of the brutal Israeli repression against Palestinian and international supporters in the Occupied Palestinian Territory at a recent non-violent protest during the annual commemoration of Land Day. In this connection, yesterday, Sunday, 28 March, scores of peace activists were joined by Christian community leaders and political officials in a protest march against illegal Israeli restrictions imposed on Palestinian Christians that are once again obstructing their access to their holy places in Occupied East Jerusalem this Easter holiday.

The protest march was peaceful and, while it symbolically breached the Israeli checkpoint near Bilal ibn Rabah Mosque in Bethlehem, the non-violent civilian protestors did not pose any threat to the Israeli occupying forces at the roadblock. However, they were met with violent repression from Israeli occupying forces, including the use of tear gas and rubber bullets. In addition, many Palestinian civilians were brutally beaten, and 14 were arrested and illegally detained, including Abbas Zaki, a member of the Central Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Israeli occupying forces transferred Mr. Zaki to the Ofer military camp, an Israeli military base inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory that serves as a prison and military court, where he remains detained, allegedly pending an investigation.

Mr. Zaki and the other non-violent protestors have been charged with incitement and accused of participating in a supposedly illegal riot and of illegal entry into Israel. Needless to say, these charges are absolutely invalid and rejected by the Palestinian side as being completely baseless and as being false accusations. Moreover, such charges are a clear indication of the intransigent pursuit of illegal policies by Israel, the occupying Power, aimed at severing Occupied East Jerusalem from its natural Palestinian surroundings, in an attempt to further entrench its illegal annexation of the occupied city into an irreversible fact on the ground. Furthermore,

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Israel's policy of targeting peaceful protesters exposes a cynical, oppressive policy that denies Palestinians their basic human and political rights to freedom of expression and to peacefully protest against the occupation's illegal oppression and subjugation.

We consider the unlawful detention of Mr. Zaki to be a provocative political act. Such ongoing punitive Israeli measures are reflective of its reprehensible sense of impunity, which is undeniably linked to the lack of accountability the occupying Power has thus far enjoyed despite its systematic, deliberate and egregious violations of international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, against the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The international community must once and for all end this impunity by holding Israel accountable to the law and to the many relevant United Nations resolutions that it has so arrogantly and destructively continued to breach and ignore.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 364 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 25 March 2010 (A/ES-10/484-S/2010/158) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations